



# IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

DIRK KEMPTHORNE – Governor  
KARL B. KURTZ – Director

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
450 West State Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720-0036  
PHONE 208-334-5625  
FAX 208-334-5926

## **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 13, 2004

Ross Mason  
(208) 869-1751

### **ENROLLMENT PERIOD FOR LOW COST CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM EXTENDED**

The enrollment period for working families to insure their children in low cost health insurance has been extended until the programs reach capacity. The extension will allow families plenty of time to apply for the Access Card/CHIP B health insurance programs. The enrollment period had been scheduled to last through September 14.

“Enrollment numbers are increasing, but we still have room for a few thousand children in these health insurance programs,” says Terry Higbee, program supervisor. “We’re going to leave enrollment open until further notice so that parents have additional time to apply. It also gives us more time to get the word out to families who may not have heard about the programs.” Access Card and CHIP B are programs for working families who currently don’t have health insurance for their children and meet income and asset qualifications. An uninsured family of four could make almost \$35,000 annually and qualify for either program.

The Access Card/CHIP B programs began in July, but many families who qualified financially already had insurance. Other families who applied were eligible for regular Medicaid health insurance programs so the new programs were left with more openings than expected.

“It’s really important that people apply for this coverage if they think they qualify. The application is free and easy to fill out. If a previous application was denied, but your financial or insurance situation has changed, we encourage you to apply again or call us for more information,” says Higbee. “We know that incomes change, company policies change and people sometimes lose their insurance. The important thing is that children get the health insurance they need. However, we also don’t want people

dropping health insurance to get one of these new programs. Access Card and CHIP B are for people who currently don't have health insurance.”

The Access Card is a premium assistance program for families who prefer to obtain health coverage through a private insurance company or through their employer. Income can be up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. A family using the Access Card receives up to \$100 per child per month (maximum of \$300 per family) to help purchase insurance.

CHIP B is low cost health coverage for Idaho children who don't have insurance and don't qualify for Idaho Medicaid or CHIP A. Income can be up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. CHIP B costs \$15 per child each month. Children up to age 19 may be included in coverage.

Families interested in signing up for the insurance can obtain an application or additional information by calling the Idaho Careline at 2-1-1 or 1-800-926-2588, or by going to this website: [www.idahohealth.org](http://www.idahohealth.org). Parents may also contact the CHIP Unit directly at 1-866-326-2485 toll free.

**(Editors:** For additional information contact Ross Mason in Boise at 869-1751)